

LABOR POWER

Official Organ of the Socialist Union Party

VOLUME 2

OCTOBER, 1940

NUMBER 4

1940 Campaign in the Homestretch

Social Democracy Fronts for Fascism

The Excess Profits Hoax

"Democracy as Usual" in Great Britain

Popular Front and French Fascism

The War Mongers at Work

Published by the Socialist Union Party,
140 Fourth Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.

PRICE 5 CENTS

Popular Front and French Fascism

(Continued from September Issue)

The *New York Times* reported that Blum took office "at a time when all authority seems to have disappeared in France, and order is being kept only because hundreds of thousands of workmen are themselves quiet and orderly." On June 12th, the *Times* headline stated, "Strikers Seen Ruling France; Violence Rises," and the *New York Herald Tribune* of the same date reported: "Tonight the strikers appeared to have France at their mercy."

The whole world focussed its attention on France, watching with breathless intensity the outcome of this titanic class struggle and speculating on the role which the new Popular Front government would play. Taking office in the midst of this crisis, Leon Blum immediately set himself the task of re-establishing capitalist "order." In this effort he was aided and counseled by the French Communist Party. Blum's first step was to call a conference of the representatives of the C. G. T. (the French equivalent of the A. F. L.) and the employers to work out terms of settlement for the evacuation of the factories.

ATTEMPTED SETTLEMENT

The panic-stricken bourgeoisie agreed only too willingly to wholesale concessions, including the right of collective bargaining, shop stewards, a forty-hour week, two weeks vacation with pay, wage increases of from 7 to 15%, etc. These concessions were hastily enacted into law by Parliament with only a scattering of opposition votes. The world capitalist press, joined by the chorus of reformists and Stalinists, hailed this settlement as a great victory for labor.

But the French workers were not quite so easily satisfied. Having challenged capitalism, they were not ready to surrender their position for a few concessions which came nowhere near solving their problems. Despite Leon Blum's Matignon Hotel accord, the workers refused to evacuate the factories. The Paris edition of the *Herald Tribune* reported on June 11th that "Numerous strike settlements were concluded and signed yesterday, but the strikers affected by the agreements continued 'staying in.' As a result,

the number of strikes in France remained as large as ever although officials had hoped that many would be actually over by the first of the week."

BLUM TO THE RESCUE

It was at this point that Blum and his Popular Front performed their most valuable services for French capitalism. By persuasion and threats he induced the workers to surrender control over the factories and return them to the employers! On June 13th, the *Paris Herald Tribune* reported that "Prepared to take extreme measures to assure order in Paris and to prevent interruption of normal services, Premier Leon Blum and other French leaders last night issued statements which are expected to bring a swift check to the spread of strikes in Paris and throughout the rest of the country."

STALINISTS HELP CAPITALISM

Among the "other French leaders" referred to was none other than Maurice Thorez, Secretary-General of the French Communist Party, who issued a statement advising the workers to leave the factories. This signal service to capitalism did not go unacknowledged. The Paris correspondent of the *London Times* telegraphed his paper that "It is also noted with satisfaction, that at a meeting of the Communist Party last night, M. Thorez, the Secretary-General, said that a strike ought to stop the moment its essential demands are met."

The "extreme measures" of Premier Blum and the "good advice" of the French Communist Party proved effective. The bewildered workers, betrayed and deserted by those to whom they looked for leadership, reluctantly evacuated the factories and returned to capitalist "normalcy." The revolutionary danger was over. French capitalism could breathe easily once more, thanks to the services of the Popular Front.

This episode was the beginning of the end for the French working class. Commenting on the situation in July, 1936, we wrote: "The workers of France, led by the labor lieutenants of the French bourgeoisie, have been crushed. The field is now clear for the forces of reaction."

(Continued on Page 12)

LABOR POWER

Published Monthly by the
SOCIALIST UNION PARTY

140 Fourth Ave.
BROOKLYN, N.Y.

Subscription:— Per Year, 50c; Semi-
Annually, 25c; Single Copy, 5c.

Composed & Printed by Voluntary Labor

Vol. 2, No. 4 **October, 1940**

Editorials . . .

THE CAMPAIGN HEADS FOR HOME

The 1940 national election campaign is now entering the home stretch. As the weeks have passed its real character as an unprincipled struggle between two sets of politicians for the reins of power has become increasingly clear.

Both on the field of foreign policy and on domestic issues there has been no real disagreement. Our original appraisal of the rivalry between Willkie and Roosevelt as a contest between Tweedledum and Tweedledee remains unchanged.

Both candidates profess, in their public utterances, to be anti-war and pro-peace. But their attitude toward each specific move by which the American government is approaching nearer and nearer to outright intervention on the side of Great Britain proves that the real issue of the current campaign is: which set of politicians is to have the prestige and power which accrue to the party in power when it plunges the country into the midst of the raging imperialist conflagration?

Rendered desperate by the urgency of British Imperialism's need for military supplies, President Roosevelt has not waited for the conclusion of the political campaign to enter on the path of open aid to Great Britain. Defying a hostile public opinion, he has presented the country with an actual act of war in his dictatorial transfer, without the consent of Congress and in defiance of capitalist international law, of the 50 "over-age" destroyers to Great Britain.

Willkie has been right behind the President, seconding his every pro-war action. As a matter of fact, this latest act of war committed by the Administration could only have been possible by Willkie's support assured in advance. Roosevelt did not take final action on the destroyer deal until he had convinced himself in advance that his opponent would approve in principle of the agreement. Had there been any possibility of opposition on the part of Willkie, Roosevelt would not have dared to take such a controversial step in the midst of a heated political struggle with his own political future at stake.

But Roosevelt knew his opponent. Willkie lost no time in approving of the destroyer transfer in principle, even though he tried to make political capital out of the dictatorial methods used by the President.

Nor was this Willkie's first manifestation of open solidarity with the Administration's war policies. When the fate of the Burke-Wadsworth peacetime conscription bill was in doubt, the Republican candidate joined with his Democratic opponent to bring pressure to bear on Congress to pass the measure without any "crippling" amendments. Willkie took this step even though counter-pressure was brought to bear on him by certain Republican congressional leaders who saw a golden opportunity to make the label of "War Party" stick to the Democrats by taking an anti-conscription stand. Placing his loyalty to the interests of American imperialism even before his factional loyalty to the Republican Party, Willkie rejected the counsel of his Party's leaders in Congress and stood shoulder to shoulder with President Roosevelt for peacetime conscription!

Willkie has conducted his campaign along the line that Roosevelt is incompetent to prepare the country's "defense" and has offered himself as one who is much better equipped to lead the nation's "defense" program. At the same time, with supreme contempt for the ordinary common sense of the American working class, this same political demagogue has attempted to palm himself off as a "peace" candidate.

A highlight of the Willkie campaign has been his spectacular effort to woo the labor vote. The G. O. P. nominee has gone out of his way to endorse every piece of New Deal labor legislation and pledge himself to its con-

tinuation. He has attacked the Roosevelt administration for aiming to governmentalize the labor movement along the totalitarian pattern.

But on the one major labor issue of the campaign Willkie has remained strangely silent. We refer to the Arnold-New Deal so-called Anti-Trust Drive against labor organization which is being soft peddled during the campaign. This vicious drive strikes at the very vitals of labor independence and is as foul a blow as was ever aimed at labor. Yet despite all his professed solicitude for labor freedom, Willkie has carefully refrained from even faintly criticizing this New Deal anti-labor campaign. Once more we have conclusive proof that on all basic issues there is no disagreement between the two standard bearers of capitalism.

In the current campaign, President Roosevelt has been favored by the Gods of Chance. It was generally recognized from the first that the President faced a tough job to break down popular prejudice against a third term as well as to overcome the mounting tide of resentment at the New Deal record of failure. But the intensification of the European war crisis, with its threats to the security of American imperialist interests, diverted attention from domestic issues and served as an excuse for raising the demand that the present Administration be continued throughout the period of crisis.

So, by a curious paradox, the successes of Hitler may prove to be the cause of the success of Roosevelt in the 1940 election. The fall of France, the Battle of Britain and the recent addition of Japan to the Axis powers in an open threat against the United States have shifted the center of political interest to foreign affairs. The President was spared the painful necessity of attempting a defense of the bankrupt New Deal.

No one was more astute than Roosevelt himself in recognizing the dangers that a campaign centering around domestic issues held for his candidacy. It was for this reason that he announced in his acceptance speech that the exigencies of "National Defense" would prevent him from engaging in the customary controversies of an election campaign. And in the weeks that have passed Roosevelt has skillfully maneuvered with issues of foreign policy to blanket completely Willkie's

anti-New Deal campaign.

No amount of skillful political manipulation, however, can hide the record of the failure of the New Deal to solve the social and economic problems facing the American people. No longer does the President repeat the boast of the 1936 campaign, "We planned it that way." For eight years of Roosevelt's New Deal social alchemy still leaves us with an army of ten million unemployed, despite the tremendous impetus to industry supplied by record-breaking armaments orders. Eight years of the New Deal regime still finds "one-third of the nation ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-housed," with poverty and misery rampant amidst an ever-growing concentration and centralization of wealth.

With the aid of the greater part of the capitalist press, Willkie has made every effort to dramatize the failure of the New Deal. But Willkie's indictment of his opponent's incapacity strikingly reveals his own. For, while condemning the Administration's program in general, Willkie pledged himself to retain every specific piece of New Deal legislation. He has repeatedly stated that he is opposed, not to the laws, but to the manner of their application and enforcement by Roosevelt and his supporters. The political henchmen of capitalism, it is plain, have no solution for the burning problem which faces them. The best they can offer the American workers is the continued application of so-called reforms and palliatives which have already demonstrated their inability to cure or relieve the social ills.

Those workers who understand the necessity of breaking with the twin parties of capitalism and who wish to register their opposition to their programs of war, Fascism and starvation, can do so most effectively by writing the name "Socialist Union Party" on their ballots in the blank space reserved for write-in votes. The restrictions of capitalist election laws in the various states make it impossible for the names of our candidates to appear on the ballots. The appearance of a large write-in vote for the Socialist Union Party will show to the more backward workers that a genuine movement toward emancipation from their social bondage is under way. That is why it is important for every class conscious worker to express his opposition to capitalism in a positive manner.

Social Democracy Fronts for Fascism

In the Labor Day issue of the Social Democratic organ, the *New Leader*, there was featured a lengthy article from the pen of Sidney Hook, entitled "Socialism, Common Sense and the War." Professor Hook, who has achieved a certain notoriety in capitalist academic circles as an authority on "Marxism," makes a strong plea, professedly as a Socialist, for the working class to support actively the struggle of Great Britain against Hitler's Germany. According to the Professor, the British ruling class is fighting the battle of "Democracy" against the forces of Fascism. Therefore, he holds, those who refuse to co-operate with British Imperialism are "revolutionary 'mad-hatters'" who are "disorganizing the struggle against Fascism." To Hook "the only practical alternative to capitulation to Hitler" is to join forces with British Imperialism.

The good Professor's article is prefaced by an editorial introduction which berates the revolutionary Marxists, including the "sliver De Leonists" for failing "to adjust themselves to the new concept of total political, economic and social destruction which lie in the wake of every Axis victory." Continues the *New Leader's* editorial wiseacre: "They have failed to adapt their hatred of war to the contemporary need for the defense of the democratic political vehicle in which they are still permitted to fight for a Socialist State and for proletarian democracy."

Gentlemen of the *New Leader* and Professor Hook, we accept the implied challenge. Let us see whether or not the revolutionary Marxists understand the lessons of contemporary history! Let us see who "disorganizes the struggle against Fascism." Hook's article serves admirably for this purpose.

WHO FIGHTS WHO?

Hook's entire position of support to British Imperialism is based on a shabby intellectual device: he portrays the struggle between Britain and Germany as though the British ruling class were seeking to destroy Hitlerism, when in fact its only aim is to crush Hitler, the leader of resurgent Imperialist Germany the most formidable commercial rival to the British Empire. Hook tells us that "Some assert that capitalist governments will not fight Hit-

ler, which, if true, makes the existence of the present war a mystery. . . . The existence of the war against Hitler sets the problem for Socialists. To use the fear that capitalists will not fight Hitler as a reason for refusing to support a war actually being waged against him makes no sense."

This is the perfect example of the straw-man technique. What the revolutionary Marxists have been expounding, and, moreover, proving, is that the British when they fight Hitler are not at all concerned with crushing *Hitlerism*, the system which chains and mercilessly exploits the German working class. Even a college professor should be able to understand that there is a world of difference between fighting Hitler the imperialist rival, and fighting *Hitlerism*, the social means by which German capitalism lives by devouring its workers. The British ruling class permitted Hitler to build up his power without challenge, as long as they believed him incapable of successfully competing with them. Only now, when this horrible Frankenstein which they nourished turns upon them, do the British rulers resist.

Sidney Hook will not dare deny that it was only AFTER Hitler had shown beyond the shadow of a doubt that his real purpose was to destroy British imperialist domination and power that Britain suddenly became concerned over the Fascist menace to "Democracy."

BEFOGGING THE ISSUE

It is only by attempting to identify the British imperialist struggle against the rival bandit Hitler with the proletarian struggle against Hitlerism and Fascism that Hook is able to make even the semblance of a case for his 1940 brand of social-patriotism. The task of herding the working class into the camp of British imperialism has been considerably facilitated for the Social Democratic appeasers by the circumstance that, outwardly at least, it appears to the workers that a British victory over Hitler offers the only possibility for the continuation of democratic forms.

Hook expresses this position in the form of a rhetorical question. "Who will deny," he writes, "that if England defeats Hitler,

British labor will be far better situated to continue its struggle for democracy and Socialism than French today?"

Once more the Professor only befores the issue. He takes it for granted that a British victory will assure the continuation of the old economic order and the resumption of democratic forms in Britain. But this assumption ignores the realities of the world in which we live. Even if the war were to end tomorrow in a British victory, the old order in Europe is doomed! With capitalism in crisis, even before the start of the war, its economic problems have multiplied a thousandfold since the outbreak of hostilities. In the opinion of one foreign correspondent, Wallace R. Deuel, in a dispatch from Berlin to the *New York Post* on Sept. 17th, "An increased drain of economic lifeblood has been going on since the outbreak of hostilities at such a rate that it is doubtful if Europe can endure much longer and still survive in anything like its previous economic and financial form." If anything, Mr. Deuel errs on the side of conservatism, for the tremendous cost in men and property to all the belligerents will necessitate years of sacrifice to replace, so that there is no doubt that totalitarianism will rule supreme unless the working class takes matters into its own hands.

BRITISH WORKERS HOGTIED

Present indications point to the probability of a long drawn-out war of attrition. The victor in this war will be in a far different position than were the Allies at the end of the last war, when they were in a position to coerce Germany into paying reparations for the cost of the war. This time there will be no reserves left to fall back on. This time the cost of the war will come out of the hides of the working class of all nations, victor and vanquished. A victory over Hitler will be an empty victory for the British workers. The conclusion of the war will find them saddled with a British Fascism intent on preserving capitalism's class privileges. Already, in the name of fighting Hitler, a full-fledged totalitarian regime has been set up.

The British workers are assured that this is but a temporary step, made necessary by the dictates of modern totalitarian warfare, and that a victory will bring a restoration of full democratic rights. But when that time

comes, if the ruling class fails to keep its promise, the workers will be helpless. For, having heeded the specious arguments of the British Professors Hook and the counterparts of the *New Leader*, the British workers have given up their reliance on independent class organization and thus left themselves powerless to ward off any further blows from their exploiters.

ADDING INSULT TO INJURY

The good Professor concludes his sermon in the interests of British imperialism by ladling out some choice advice: "Socialists, in the present period, can fruitfully concern themselves with the problem of how to render the most effective support of the democracies in their struggle against Fascism and at the same time strengthen the prestige of their ideas." But Hook is by no means original in this idea. For this is precisely the advice that Leon Blum, and the Socialist and Communist Parties bestowed upon the French workers, during the halcyon days of the Popular Front. If Hook will take the trouble to check he will find that every point he now makes in support of British imperialism was previously impressed on the French working class and used against the revolutionary Marxists by the French social patriots.

The French were also told that support of their own "Democratic" bourgeoisie was the only practical alternative to subjugation by Hitler. The workers listened and surrendered their independence for the fake "National Unity" of the capitalist government. What was their reward? The moment the interests of the French "Democratic" capitalists were threatened with destruction, they lost no time in capitulating to Hitler, sacrificing the workers to save their own privileges and property. As long as Professor Hook is so free with his advice, he should certainly be able to explain in what respect the American and the British "Democrats" differ from the French, and why they will act differently under similar circumstances. Otherwise his suggestion as a professed "Socialist" that the American workers take the same road to doom is nothing less than brazen effrontery.

WHO DEFENDS DEMOCRACY?

Now, a word to our would-be instructors, the Social Democratic editors of the *New Leader*, who counsel us to adapt our "hatred

of war" to the contemporary need for the defense of the democratic political vehicle in which we are still permitted to fight for a Socialist State and for proletarian democracy." After witnessing the fate of the German workers who defended their "democratic political vehicle," or, in other words, the capitalist state, and the similar fate that was visited upon the French workers after their self-sacrificing defense of French "Democracy," only fools or knaves can still talk about the need of defending the "democratic political vehicle." And we are far from conceding that the *New Leader* scribblers are fools!

Socialists understand full well the advantages of capitalist democracy, and we propose to fight for them as long as we can. At the same time we are far from accepting the Social Democratic fairy tale that the capitalist class can be relied on to defend and preserve this democracy. The financial and industrial tycoons who rule America will permit democracy to exist only so long as it does not endanger their class rule and privileges. Once these interests become imperilled however, they

will not scruple for a moment to have their politicians clamp down and destroy all vestiges of civil rights.

SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY— ENEMY OF LABOR

At a time when Democratic capitalism is visibly cracking up in the United States, when a totalitarian regime is rapidly being foisted on the American people, when even genuine old-fashioned bourgeois democrats like Senator Norris and Wheeler speak out in alarm at this growing trend toward dictatorship, the Social Democratic lapdogs of capitalism choose to throw bouquets at the capitalist state in an attempt to cover up the Fascist blitzkrieg which is now gathering headway!

Not the least of labor's enemies are the social-democratic appeasers, the agents of capital within the ranks of labor whose mask of Socialism makes them even more insidious and deadly than the out-and-out capitalist supporters. To expose the villainies and treason of this breed against the working class is one of the most essential tasks of the revolutionary Marxist movement.

The Excess Profits Hoax

The so-called Excess Profits Tax law as enacted by Congress signals a complete capitulation on the part of the politicians to the demands raised by the recent "strike" of capital in the war industries.

In July and August, facts came to light showing that the "defense" program had stalled even before it began because industrialists, particularly the aviation interests, refused to sign contracts unless the Vinson-Trammel Act, limiting profits on government orders to 8 per cent, was repealed and other concessions made. In the spirit of true "national unity" the politicians of both parties immediately proceeded to take steps to meet the demands of the "persecuted" manufacturers.

"RELIEF" FOR ARMAMENT PATRIOTS

The bill as passed suspends the 8 per cent profit limitation imposed by the Vinson-Trammel Act and includes an "accelerated amor-

tization" provision, permitting corporations to deduct from their taxable income 20 per cent per year of the cost of new plant facilities. Thus the normal procedure of writing off the cost of plant equipment over a twenty to thirty year period is cut to five years to permit the capitalists a tremendous reduction in their tax bills during the present war crisis. Thus far, the "Excess-Profits Tax Bill" appears to increase rather than reduce war profiteering!

As a matter of fact, the weakest part of this supposed tax bill is the portion dealing with the taxing of "excess profits." This provision imposes a tax on excess corporate profits—after deducting the 20% yearly amortization allowance on new plants and the average normal profits of the past four years. The tax rises from 25% of the first \$20,000 of such excess income to 50% of all such earnings over \$500,000. Under an alternative formula, corporations may apply the above rates to all income in excess of 8% of in-

vested capital. The arms magnates would, of course, choose the formula under which their particular financial structure could manage to hold on to more of its profits. In addition, the Bill grants a flat exemption of \$5,000 of excess profits under either formula. The Bill further gives corporations the right to select three out of the four years from 1936 to 1939 for computing the excess profits credits, if there was a loss year in that period. The effect of this latter proviso would be to increase the average income for the base period and thus increase the exemption from excess-profits taxation.

From even this skeleton outline of the main features of the Bill it becomes clear that a gigantic swindle is being perpetrated by Congress and the Administration in collusion with the all-powerful financial interests controlling the war industries. The very title of the Bill is misleading, because its main purpose is to make possible sky-high profits rather than to tax profits, by abolishing the 8% limit and permitting "accelerated plant amortization." As for the taxing portion of the Bill, by choosing as a base the profits of the last four years, it permits huge corporations like U. S. Steel and General Motors, which have been making tremendous profits in armaments production for both foreign and home consumption, to escape with only a comparatively small tax to pay.

The question arises, why, if the Bill apparently is intended to free armaments manufacturers from profit limitations, was it labelled an "Excess-Profits Tax" law and burdened with fake tax provisions? In commenting on the Bill as presented to the House by the subcommittee of which he was chairman, Representative Cooper of Tennessee let the cat out of the bag when he said he thought the measure did "all that can be done for industry." He added, "You are giving industry a great big handout when you give them amortization. You are also giving them a substantial bit when you suspend the Vinson-Trammell Act. *So we thought that the excess profits tax should be enacted at the same time.*"

Equally to the point was the financial page dispatch to the New York Times from Washington, which stated, "Political considerations were influential in tying the elimination of the 8% profit ceiling and the 'accelerated depre-

ciation' issue to the question of excess profits in one bill. . . . The first two issues could have been disposed of without great difficulty had it not been for fear that Congress would be accused of surrendering everything to business. The tax on excess profits was needed as a counter-irritant. . . ."

In short, the swindle that goes by the name of an excess-profits "tax" was attached as a sort of political rider to a Bill which smashes previously-erected bars to war profiteering, precisely in order to fool the working class! For this same gang of politicians has just finished putting over the "Selective Service Bill" under which millions of working class youth will be dragooned into the armed forces to face the prospect of losing life and limb. The earnings of these conscripts has been severely curtailed to the "patriotic" sums of \$21 per month for the first four months and \$30 for the last eight months of their period of service. Small wonder our "statesmen" in Washington felt the need of a "counter-irritant"! The propertyless masses are to be forced into the army, whether they like it or not, at no more than \$7 per week, while armaments magnates are guaranteed millions in profits at no personal risk—not even to their pocketbooks!

BRASS HATS HELP PAYTRIOTS

In their campaign to free themselves from the war profit restrictions the armament interests received the full support of the brass hats of the Army and Navy. Clinging to their ancient practice of serving those who feed them, the generals and rear-admirals have stepped out of their specialized roles to add their voices to the capitalist chorus protesting against the limitation of war profits. Testifying before the Senate Appropriations Committee, Rear-Admiral Tower, Chief of the Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics, blamed the profits limitation and "the lack of legal provisions under which contractors can depreciate their necessary plant extension" for the lack of signed contracts. Admiral Furlong, Chief of the Navy's Bureau of Ordnance, explained that the U. S. Steel Corporation is "quite willing to take a contract, but they do not want to spend \$4,000,000 and then be taxed over a long period of years. . . ." Similar pleas on behalf of the industrialists were made by General Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Corps, and other officers.

Thus the military and naval bureaucracy rendered yeoman service in the interests of its capitalist masters.

PHONY INDUSTRIAL CONSCRIPTION

In a demagogic attempt to weaken the opposition to the then pending Burke-Wadsworth Peacetime Conscription Bill, and to make it appear that industry, too, is being subjected to the same risks as labor, the Administration forces in the Senate incorporated a phony industrial conscription plan in the Burke-Wadsworth Act. The final form of this plan gives the President power to take over and operate on a "just rental" basis any factory whose owners refuse to accept defense contracts—at unlimited profits and with the privilege of "accelerated depreciation" for new plant expenditures. So that there would be no misunderstanding on the part of the poor downtrodden capitalists, the army and navy bigwigs were quick to give their assurances of no interference with industry.

From the Navy Department there came a statement that, "Having complete faith in the voluntary co-operation of industry, the Navy Department does not expect to invoke this law for that purpose. . . . The law may be used, however, to conscript those materials or commodities under contract for delivery to non-essential purposes. . . . The law will, therefore, be used for the protection of industry and to make it possible for industry to co-operate with the department."

Expressing similar friendly sentiments toward industry, Robert P. Patterson, Assistant Secretary of War, told the National Industrial Advertisers' Convention in Detroit that, "I am confident that the power will seldom be invoked. Such authority existed in 1917-18. It was used but twice. There is no reason to believe it will have to be invoked in the present armament program. On the contrary, there is every indication that industry is most willing to co-operate." Quite true! Industry has nothing to fear from the false industrial conscription plan of the Selective Service Act.

SACRIFICE FOR WHOM?

While the politicians, the brass hats, and the arms magnates join hands in boosting the price of patriotism sky high, the working class is being told to prepare for sacrifices! Mil-

ATTENTION

San Francisco

Free Study Class In Socialism

For Further Information, Address

SOCIALIST UNION PARTY

P. O. Box 4201

San Francisco, Calif.

lions of men are now to be herded into the army and prepared to fight for the imperialist interests of their masters at a few cents over a dollar a day. All independent labor action is being smothered with an artificially-created war hysteria and crisis of "National Defense" and "National Unity."

We are told that it is the duty of labor to stand by the Government. Who is this Government? It is the profit mad capitalist class with its servile politicians and armed forces in the foreground. It is this Government, we are told, which is preparing to defend democracy against Fascism! What interest have they in the question of Fascism versus democracy, except as they can use the issue to trick workers into coming to their support against their rival imperialists? By their crude attempts to hide from the workers their sordid struggle for more and more profits, they only succeed in making their lying slogans stand out all the more glaringly. They are preparing, not to defend any abstract ideal such as "democracy," but rather to protect and extend their foreign markets and investments!

The cynicism of the ruling class, its selfish concern with its own pocketbook will serve to speed the hour when the working class awakes to the falsity of the watchwords under which the workers have been herded to the defense of capitalism's interests. Then let the imperialists beware! Once the workers see the truth, they will rise in all their might and put an end to the exploiters, their politicians, their brass hats and their imperialist wars!

“Democracy as Usual” in Great Britain

From time to time since the beginning of the war, various reports and comments appearing in the capitalist press and in the journals of its social democratic satellites have created the impression that “Democracy continues as usual” in Great Britain despite the war’s ravages.

On the other hand, revolutionary Socialists and class conscious workers have been hammering away the warning that war buries democracy and breeds totalitarian dictatorship. Seemingly there is a contradiction between the theory and the facts—but only seemingly!

We have at hand the July issue of the *Socialist Standard*, official organ of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, published at London, which offers an object lesson in the workings of war-time “Democracy.”

By way of introduction, we may state that the S.P.G.B. is composed of a small but determined group of British workers who have hewn close to the line of revolutionary Socialism for almost forty years. They have consistently opposed all imperialist wars and have refused to bow before the fake “National Unity” and “Defense” hysteria generated within the labor movement for the purpose of driving the workers into the arms of their exploiters.

REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM GAGGED

Up to the July, 1940 issue, the *Socialist Standard* had been permitted to publish its convictions more or less freely, without censorship or restriction. On last May 19th, however, the Home Secretary announced a new series of “defense” regulations, affecting propaganda and publications. Briefly summarized, these regulations permit the British Secretary of State to suppress at will any publication which, in his opinion, “is calculated to foment opposition to the successful issue of the war.” The Secretary is also empowered to seize any printing press used in the production of such proscribed publications.

The July issue of the *Socialist Standard* bears the imprint of these “defense” regulations. Under the magazine’s editorial masthead appears the following statement:

“THE SOCIALIST STANDARD IN WAR-TIME”

“The war has at last dealt our propaganda a hard blow. The recent drastic additions to the regulations on printing and publishing have forced us to the conclusion that it is impossible, in present circumstances, to explain our case adequately as we would wish. As we are not prepared to put our views forward in such an emasculated form that it would be bound to give rise to misunderstandings and a misconception of our attitude, we have decided to abandon the publication of propagandist matter, in the customary meaning of the term ‘propagandist.’

“While we deeply regret having to adopt this course, we cannot see any workable alternative to it.

“We prefer to explain our position frankly, and hope our readers will understand and continue to support us.

“Whatever the future may have in store for us we stand steadfastly by the pledge made in August, 1914, and again in September, 1939, that the principles and policy that have guided us throughout the whole of our history remain our unaltered attitude, and will continue to guide us and determine our actions until the war clouds pass away.”

This statement speaks for itself. There can be no doubt of its import. In order to continue publication at all and to secure a printer who is willing to assume the risk of publishing a Marxist paper under the onerous penalties of the “defense” regulations it was necessary to impose a “voluntary” censorship and surrender the right to oppose the war openly. Revolutionary Marxist criticism of the war is thus effectively gagged in “Democratic” England. The July issue of the *Socialist Standard* devotes itself to abstract theoretical statements of academic Marxism, but ignores the realities of the immediate class struggle raging. What a commentary this episode affords on the pretensions of those advocates of the “lesser evil” policy, who assert that “at least” democracy still exists in Great Britain!

There are some small minds who may find comfort in the fact that Marxist publications may still appear in Great Britain, even though in mutilated and emasculated form, in contrast to Germany under Hitler, where any kind of opposition or refusal to accept Nazi doctrines is remorselessly suppressed. This is cold comfort, indeed. It is quite true that the British dictatorship has up till now been far from assuming the severity and ferociousness of the Hitler regime. But the difference is merely one of degree, not of principle.

It so happens that British imperialism can

still permit itself the luxury of a limited opposition. However, as is pointed out elsewhere in this issue of *LABOR POWER*, the growing exigencies of a bankrupt and decaying capitalism will make necessary the imposition of increasing totalitarian restrictions as time goes on. The present limitations and restrictions are merely the beginning.

For the rest, our readers are now in a position to judge at their true worth the inspired press accounts that "Democracy continues as usual" in Great Britain.

The War Mongers at Work

The place was Chicago's historic Coliseum on South Wabash, the occasion a meeting of William Allen White's self-styled Committee to Defend America By Aiding the Allies. Although the time was September 18th, 1940, and World War II a horrible reality of more than a year, the writer, who had lived through the hectic days of early 1917, could almost believe that time had reversed itself and that he was once more in the days immediately preceding America's entrance into the first World War. History was repeating itself. Again the ruling class was arousing mass opinion in preparation for battle. And that repetition was no farce but stark tragedy, for this second international blood bath promises to maim and slay many more than its predecessor.

American capitalist opinion is divided into two schools of thought. The first of these would "appease" Hitler, and in so doing strive to grab its share of the booty resulting from the collapse of the decadent British Empire. The second of these schools of opinion (the far greater in numbers and influence) foresees the inevitable failure of such a course, and would enter the conflict now on the side of Britain while the advantage of having that power as an ally still remains. It was this latter element that was sponsoring the meeting at the Coliseum. They did the job up brown with as brilliant a galaxy of bourgeois spellbinders as were ever assembled under one roof.

"OUR WAY OF LIFE"

The crowd at the meeting numbered about 12,000 people. The first speaker was suave Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., son of Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., both of movie fame. Some of his father's Anglomania must have lingered in the blood of Junior, for he waxed very eloquent (in approved Hollywood diction) about "our way of life" being the same as that of Britain, both of which were menaced by the onward march of totalitarianism. He neglected to mention, however, that there is very little in common between the way of life of the ordinary wage slave in either Britain or America and that of a pampered movie star or of a peer of the realm. The crowd, although composed largely of wage workers, failed to note this slight omission. They rose to their feet and cheered him wildly time and time again.

The next speaker was Dorothy Thompson. She drew a terrible and probably accurate word picture of Hitler's plans for world domination, adding as she did so a few pertinent economic facts that could leave no shred of doubt in any mind not befuddled by hysteria that the present war was essentially a conflict over natural resources and a market in which to dispose of the surplus wealth stolen from labor. But this was entirely lost upon the crowd, which by now was worked up into a frenzy of enthusiasm. They cheered her with as much vigor as they had Fairbanks, especially when she injected some remarks about the "Co-operative commonwealth of

the world," evidently to hook half-baked "radical" suckers.

HELL BENT FOR WAR

The other speakers were a retired Admiral of the Navy and Maury Maverick, the former Texas congressman. Maverick, a fiery orator of the old swashbuckling Southern political type, added fuel to the flame of pro-war ardor, but said nothing worthy of note. Of a different stripe was the naval officer who pronounced a war between this country and Germany inevitable if England were defeated as he implied she would be without American aid. This statement received the same enthusiastic ovation as the preceding remarks. When the meeting ended the crowd streamed out of the building wearing buttons with pro-war slogans and taking with them signs of a like nature for use on automobiles and windows.

The whole thing was clear evidence that the nation is headlong on the road to war. In face of this fact and the prospective advent of a capitalist dictatorship, the class-conscious working class of America must certainly do something more than mouth pacifist slogans. A clear-cut fighting workers party must penetrate into, educate and help build up the economic organization of labor to the end that America shall be defended in the only possible way it can be defended and human liberty preserved—by abolishing capitalism and with it the need for disposing of surplus wealth in distant lands. When that has been done, the people of this country will have a way of life that is worth fighting for.

FIGHT FOR A WORKERS WORLD !

The first step towards bringing such a way of life is to join the Socialist Union Party and help create the spearhead of the lance that will pierce the heart of capitalism.

(Continued from Page 2)

POPULAR FRONT AND FRENCH FASCISM

The Popular Front regime held power for two years—years packed full of political maneuvers and shifts designed to perpetuate French capitalism by disarming the workers and rendering them helpless for the struggle against the growing forces of Fascism.

Proof that its professed anti-Fascism was

a sham and a snare was furnished when the Popular Front betrayed its sister Popular Front government in Spain when the butcher Franco, aided by the armed support of Hitler and Mussolini, began the Civil War against the democratically-chosen regime. The defeat of the Spanish Loyalist forces, which dealt a crushing blow to the world proletariat, was hastened by the infamous farce of "Non-Intervention" invented by Britain and pushed forward by the Blum government. Under this policy, Great Britain and France pledged themselves to maintain strict neutrality in the Spanish Civil War and to refrain from supplying either side with military supplies. Franco could ask for nothing better, since his Axis allies were supplying him with unlimited equipment and food, as well as sending troops. The Loyalists, with only a limited supply of arms and planes from the Soviet Union, were finally compelled to yield. The Popular Front's disgraceful treachery was endorsed by the votes of the Socialist and Communist Deputies when the question of confidence was raised!

FASCISM IN ALL BUT NAME

On the grounds of national emergency the Popular Front gradually wiped out every bit of the meager social legislation which it had originally granted as a sop to the sit-in strikers. The workers were saddled with compulsory arbitration and severe restrictions on the right to strike. Finally, the Popular Front government, borrowing a leaf from the book of the dictators whom they were so violently opposing in words, requested from Parliament the right to rule by decree power. M. Daladier, Minister of Defense in the last Popular Front cabinet, in asking this extraordinary power, told the press that "By a system of co-ordination which as nearly approaches totalitarian methods as possible under a parliamentary regime, France is preparing to meet the darkening international situation."

(To be Concluded)

**DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR
SUBSCRIPTION TO LABOR POWER.**

**Send orders and remittances to the
Business Manager, Labor Power—
140 Fourth Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y. C.**